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ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD

for the period November 1, 1949 - June 30, 1950



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A

Exhibition Programme

1. Work in the Galleries

Reorganisation is aimed at improving and modernising methods of exhibition, and bringing them into line with the stated purpose of the Museum. The Galleries housing the collection of Musical Instruments and the Flemish and German Collection have been completed. Work has begun on the 18th century English Gallery, and plans are under way for a complete reorganisation of the very crowded African Gallery.

On a smaller scale work has been as follows. Newly arranged cases have been put out in the Eskimo, Ontario and Huronia Galleries. There has been rearrangement of the exhibits of both Greek and Roman coins. A model of a Pompeian house has been completed and is on exhibition in one of the Roman galleries; in this same gallery a mural depicting a dinner scene in a house of this kind is now on exhibit on the wall. Exhibits in the second and third Egyptian galleries have been rearranged. The Near Eastern Gallery is to be reorganised to include new acquisitions. New exhibits show the development of Chinese bronze coinage and the early development of writing in China.

Experiments have been made with the use of coloured backgrounds complementing the exhibited material, and with special interior case lighting. This last has proved a great success in the Special Exhibition Gallery.

2. Storage

Storage continues to be one of the main problems. The new study and work room to be made out of the old Japanese Print Gallery will ease the pressure on the top floor slightly, and so should the use on an increased scale of the lower parts of cases. These, however, are only palliative measures, and the latter is in many ways less satisfactory than keeping the objects on exhibition. The problem can only be settled by an increase in the free space at the Museum's disposal.

Storage cupboards in the Textile Study room have now been completed up to the ceiling, and will for a time accommodate a rapidly growing collection.

3. Special Exhibitions

The programme during the period covered by this report has been as follows:

Figures of Christ

Women's Costume 1880 - 1900

Books of the Middle Ages - an important exhibition consisting largely of loans from public and private collections in the United States and Canada.

English and Irish Glass 1680 - 1850; this continues the policy begun in the Silver Exhibition last year, of devoting the Summer Exhibition to collectors' pieces, and of making it up in part from the Museum's own collection, and in part from pieces borrowed locally.

There have been two special exhibitions during this period held in the permanent galleries. The first was of Chinese Paper Gods of the New Year; the second, and more important, a large exhibition of seals, gems and cameos from the earliest civilisations to the Roman Empire, under the title "4000 Years of Engraved Stones". This was very largely the work of our Lady Davis Fellow, Dr. Borowski; like the exhibition of mediaeval books it relied heavily on loans from outside sources.

The new Japanese Print Gallery was used for the Annual Exhibition of the Society of Canadian Painter-Etchers and Engravers during March 1950.

4. Loans

Special circumstances have justified the Museum accepting the following loans:

Two important early Chinese paintings from Tun-Huang, one painted on fabric, showing a cartouche with dedicatory inscription and the date A.D. 595, the other on thick paper showing a Bodhisattva and family donor, with inscription and date A.D. 696; from Mr. M. R. D. Vos, Miss P. L. Vos and Mrs. M. E. Moscovitz.

Two Assyrian relief sculptures, about 900 B.C.; from the National Gallery of Canada.

Pierced bronze plaque from the Caucasus, pre-Han; 2 Egyptian cylinder seals, both with the name of Tuthmosis III; a Syrian ivory figurine, about 1500 B.C.; from Dr. Borowski.

French-Canadian silver altar vessel by Laurent Amyot; from Major Raymond Willis.

11 pieces of French-Canadian secular silver, including pieces by Hanvoyzè, Paradis and Lambert; from Mr. John Langdon, Montreal.

Silver tankard, London 1795, presented to him by the Massey Foundation; from Mr. L. R. Rolph.

Exhibit of specimens from the excavation at Point Peninsula; from Mr. Peter Pringle and Mr. Ralph Schooley.

Outgoing loans were made to an exhibition of Jewish Art and Culture; Ethnological material from the North-West Coast was lent to the London Public Library and Museum.

The loan of Chinese export porcelain from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts was returned.

5. Disposals

A small number of objects was disposed of to local Museums in the Province. All had originally been purchases and were many times duplicated in the collections.

B

Reports from Special Departments

1. Chief Cataloguer's Department

During the period November 1949 - June 1950 the Department has continued the new system adopted for cataloguing Museum material the previous year. This system is, and looking to the future should continue to be, much more satisfactory than that previously used. It permits individual Departments to have duplicate records, and provides for subject files and cross indexing. Among other objections to the old system were its lack of uniformity, lack of recorded information, the difficulty of expanding records, and the outmoded numbering system, which made it cumbersome and unsatisfactory.

Through this office details relative to acquisitions and loans have been handled. For the ten and a half months ending on May 15th, 1950, the number of acquisitions alone has amounted to a total of 1326 individual items; that figure represents only a fraction of the number of objects handled, since much of the time has been taken up in

dealing with the uncatalogued back-log of objects on display, of which no records exist. The actual number of such pieces dealt with in the course of the year is not readily ascertainable, but it probably represents two or three times the figure given for new acquisitions. The largest amount of back-log cataloguing has been done on objects from the Classical coin collection and the Egyptian, Chinese and Modern European Departments, but a certain amount has been necessary in all Departments.

Special Exhibitions entail a considerable amount of work in this Department, particularly when material is imported necessitating involved customs procedure and placing of insurance. All loan material is checked in and out, as is material entering the Museum for examination by the staff, either for an opinion on provenance, etc., or if objects are offered for sale.

2. The Chinese Library

The work of classifying and cataloguing books in the Chinese Library has progressed steadily and has been made possible through the assistance given by members of the staff of the Department of East Asiatic Studies. There still remains the long task of indexing and making the card catalogue.

A grant to the fund of the Chinese Library this year has enabled us to add several important books to our shelves. These have filled in a serious gap or two and have helped to bring the Library up to date on recent archaeological research, which is throwing such important light on ancient Chinese history.

3. The Main Library

The Library fund has purchased ninety new books, bought at the suggestion of the Heads of the different Departments. We are subscribing to four new periodicals, making a total of twenty-four annually. A new Atlas, a large English Dictionary and an Encyclopaedia were a large item in the budget, and fill a long felt need.

The slack shelves left from last summer's stock-taking have tided us over this year's additions, but as the photographs and other material from the Main Office are moved to the Library, storage space will again be a problem. At present there are no changes in Library arrangement to report.

4. The Stamp Collection

The reorganisation of the Stamp Collection has been proceeding slowly but favourably, with the work concentrated

on the Canadian stamps, of which both mint and superb used examples are shown. The sequence of display has been improved upon to allow for easier viewing. Some work has also been done on the Great Britain penny reds and other early issues.

5. The Sigmund Samuel Canadiana Collection

The growth of the Sigmund Samuel collection of Canadiana continues to be extremely rapid. Since the last report, the collection has been enlarged by one hundred and fifty-eight paintings and prints. The accessions include a portrait in oils of the Marquis de Montcalm by an unidentified French-Canadian artist of the 18th century, and a portrait of Wolfe by Nathaniel Hone, R.A. The rest of the pictures include water-colours, engravings, mezzotints, and lithographs, and a fine group of three late 16th century maps in original colours. ~~The latest group of three late 16th century maps in original colours.~~ The latest addition to the collection is an important book of original sketches by W. H. Bartlett, dated 1838, and including fifty pictures of various sizes, of cities and towns in Lower and Upper Canada. The new Canadiana gallery should be ready for occupancy at the end of the year, and plans are already being made for the showing of the collection in it.

C

Staff of the Museum

1. Changes in Staff

Mr. William Todd was married in June of this year to Miss Dorothy Henham, who is retiring from her post of Executive Assistant.

Miss Nancy Hamm was married in May and continues her work in the Near Eastern and Modern European Departments as Mrs. Kimcerley.

Miss Anne Thomson was granted a year's leave of absence as from September 1949, and this period was extended by the Board for a further ten months, to last until June 30th, 1951. It is with great regret that I have to report that she was killed in a traffic accident in Boston early in June.

2. Special Work of the Staff

Dr. E. Borowski was attached to the Museum as a Fellow of the Lady Davis Foundation for two years from May 1949. One of the two years has now expired, and looking back over it I feel that the Museum has profited

greatly from Dr. Borowski's presence. I have referred above to the exhibition "4000 Years of Engraved Stones" which represents his work. In addition to this he has classified and catalogued our own small collection of Near Eastern seals and gems, and has been of great help in the attempt to build up our Near Eastern Collection in both quality and quantity; his contacts with European and other collectors in this field have been of great value to us.

Dr. Borowski's Fellowship will expire in less than a year now, and the problem of his future employment has already arisen. From the Museum point of view it would be desirable that he should continue here for a time. I have always been doubtful whether Toronto does or could offer enough to keep a scholar of his standing here permanently, but I feel the Museum should be prepared to do everything possible to prolong his stay here for at least a year after the end of his Fellowship next May.

3. Publications

Books of the Middle Ages, an introduction to the Special Exhibition held under this title and a brief catalogue of the Museum's collections.

The University Press is at present working on the 4th edition of the Museum's Outline Guide to the East Asiatic Department; a second edition of the Bulletin No. 12 on the Chinese Buddhist Fresco; and on the first three Museum picture books.

The two books by members of the Museum staff referred to in the last Report, Palestine Ancient and Modern by Miss Needler and the Excavation of Fort Ste. Marie I by Mr. Kidd, continue to receive favourable reviews in many scientific journals.

4. Lectures, etc.

Lectures have been given by members of the Museum staff in courses of the University Departments of Art & Archaeology, East Asiatic Studies, Anthropology, and to the 4th year Home Economics Students. Lectures have also been given for the Museum's Division of Education; in the Extension Services of the University and the Museum; and to the Ryerson Institute of Technology and the Sinden School of Design. Other lectures were given to out of town groups.

The galleries of the Museum are used extensively and continuously by classes of the Ontario College of Art. It is coming to be realised on both sides that the Museum and the College of Art are, in different fields, aiming at the same end, and I look forward to a steady increase of our usefulness.

5. Visitors

I referred to this subject in my last Report, and mention is again to say that since then the East Asiatic Department has kept a check on all visitors and inquiries. During the months covered by this Report they had 175 visitors needing special attention, and 15 important scholars to whom a lot of time had to be given. They saw and gave opinions on some 60 objects or groups of objects, ten of which involved special visits outside the Museum. This is a type of service which all Museums are expected to give, and which we do willingly. I mention it here to stress the very high percentage of time it involves with so small a staff.

6. Activities

The Director was asked to be a member of a special Committee to report on the Museums in Ottawa, formed by the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, and attended the meeting of it in Ottawa.

In the attempt to provide such help to the small Museums of this Province as we are capable of, the Director has visited the Museums at Niagara-on-the-Lake, and at Sharon, to give technical advice on rearrangement and improvement. Miss Clark and Mr. Godfrey gave similar assistance to Huronia House Museum at Midland. A loan of show cases to Huronia House was also made.

Miss Fernald attended meetings of the Far Eastern Ceramic Group at Philadelphia, and of the Far Eastern Association at Ann Arbor.

Miss Burt-Gerrans attended the Conference of the American Museums Association at Colorado Springs.

Special leave for visits to England and Europe was granted to Miss Mary Campbell and to Miss Anna Clarke.

Members of the staff took part in a broadcast on the Royal Ontario Museum organised by the C.B.C. during March.

7. Excavation

The Museum is not able to carry out any excavation on its own behalf during 1950. Members of the staff have taken part in excavations carried out and arranged by the University Department of Anthropology.

8. Ontario Textile Research

After two very successful seasons in the Niagara Peninsula and the southwestern part of the province, this research is turning towards the east. Plans are for a concentration of activity in the area of Prince Edward County, and the first stages of this work have already been carried out.

D

Recommendations

I said in my Report for 1948-9 that "this is now a large Museum by any standards, and it should consider and treat itself as such". The key-note lies, I think, in the word Quality. Even apart from considerations of space we are trying to restrict our acquisitions and activities to what is of really high quality. Only by this means can the Museum attain significance either in or outside Toronto. It is one of the dilemmas of a Museum of our kind that it has to judge objects by two different and often conflicting criteria - the archaeological criterion of what tells a story, and the artistic criterion of what is good in quality. So far as display material goes, I am, where possible, making primary use of the latter. I am aiming at the highest quality in purchases, in the gifts we accept (out of the many offered), in methods of display, in the publications, lectures, teaching and other work which any member of the staff does. Without this stress on quality our boast of size seems to me completely meaningless.

Arising from this, I have certain recommendations to make to the Board.

Finance

The Trade Union formed among Unskilled Employees of the University has recently negotiated an increase in salary for Museum guards and cleaners. The increase is sufficient to make the pay of the guard and cleaner (who is paid by the University Superintendent) more than that of any member of our Preparator's staff; in addition to this, the uniform is provided. Comparison of the responsibilities of a guard on one side and a Preparator's Assistant on the other is merely ridiculous; and on top of this is the fact that three members of our Preparator's staff came from the staff of guards and cleaners because it seemed that there were more opportunities here. These three are worse off now than they were before they joined us, which one of them did 17 years ago. In my opinion it is urgent that the Board remedy this extremely unfair situation.

The present arrangements for the Museum's Purchase Fund, which shares the annual character of our budget, makes it almost impossible that the Museum should ever acquire a really first class object from its own funds. With the market as it is at present, and shows every sign of continuing to be, \$5000.00 is insufficient for a Masterpiece. If the \$5000.00 must be spent within the 12 month period, the Museum can never acquire a Masterpiece, and may well be tempted to spend the money on second class or unimportant objects rather than on nothing. This seems to me to defeat the end for which the money is granted, and I wish to ask the Board to arrange with the Chief Accountant for this Museum to save up to a definite sum, say \$1000.00 each year. In this way, over a long period, what might be called a Masterpiece Fund would be built up.

I wish to repeat what I said in last year's Report about funds for our two Libraries, and for Excavation. It is only with Libraries to which a proper supply of books is assured that we can maintain any standard of scholarship. As to excavation, the activities of the University of Western Ontario in the Midland area are enough to show that field work of this kind is nowadays a first class means of stimulating public support and interest. This Museum has missed a great opportunity by its failure to provide funds for the double purpose that excavation serves - the contribution to science and the gaining that public support which the provincial Museum should have in the province.

The two improvements in working conditions on the ground floor, referred to in this section in last year's Report, have now been approved by the Board. Work on the humidifier is to start during this summer and money for the dust collector was included in this year's budget.

Space

I wish to stress the recommendations made last November. Our position in one way is worse than it was then, in that the number of people to be housed in our 27 rooms has increased from 46 to 47. The increase is in the University Department of Anthropology, not in the Museum staff.

Storage and working space remains one of our greatest problems. No amount of adaptation of the space facilities offered by the Museum building itself and by Holwood House can be enough to provide anything like the storage space that is needed. Working space too is both inadequate and, in many cases, unsuitable. With more space and adequate laboratory equipment for the Preparator's staff the waste of time involved in a lot of the work could be eliminated.

Staff

Under this heading, as under the last, I wish to stress what I wrote last November. The Preparator's staff is still very much too small for all the various jobs which have to be undertaken by them. The appearance of the galleries, which has always been a great credit to this Museum, is now maintained under ever increasing difficulties; the lack of cleaning and renovation, an essential part of the work on both objects and cases, must soon become apparent. Meanwhile the two members of this staff mentioned in the last Report are a year older, and we are still faced with the prospect of the time when they have retired and we are deprived of their experience and knowledge, and have nothing to take its place. As I pointed out in the last Report, it takes up to five years to train a member of this staff fully.

E

Principal Acquisitions

1. East Asiatic Department

Stone grave relief called a "Mortuary Bed", late 6th century. Gift of the Reuben Welles Leonard Estate.

Pair of celadon bowls with floral design, Sung Set of blue glaze belt plaques in gilt bronze frame work, probably early T'ang. Gift of Bishop White.

Gilt bronze stem cup with engraved hunting scenes, probably 8th century. Purchased.

2 wooden mortuary figures, lacquered and painted, from Chiang-Sha, 4th century B.C. Purchased.

Ju-i Sceptre, iron damascened with silver, dated A.D. 1622. Purchased.

2. Ethnology Department

Collection of Arctic material. Gift of Mr. L. A. Learmonth.

3. Modern European Department

Pair of French Canadian pine candlesticks; French Canadian period chair of Louis XIII design; mahogany bracket clock, c. 1780, with the name of a Montreal dealer on the dial. Gift of the Laidlaw Lumber Company.

2 hard paste porcelain saucers, early 19th century. Russian, for the Persian market. Gift of Ralph M. Chait, Esq.

Silver wine taster by Paul Lambert (1691-1749), Quebec.
Gift of Major Raymond Willis.

Medal of Pope Leo XII dated 1825 and medal of Pope Gregory XVI dated 1834, both gold; Mexican Liberation Medal of Augustin I, 1823. Bequest from the Elizabeth Clark Estate, through the Toronto General Trusts Corporation.

Dutch hard paste porcelain sugar castor with silver mounts, 3rd quarter of the 18th century; hard paste porcelain dish, Meissen, about 1720, with the mark of the Johanneum Museum; soft paste porcelain cup and saucer, French, St. Cloud, 1730-62; soft paste porcelain saucer, Vincennes, 1753; cream Queensware plate, Wedgwood, late 18th century; soft paste porcelain plate, Swiss, Nyon, late 18th century; hard paste porcelain tankard, Chinese Export Ware, early 18th century, and another, second half 17th century; hard paste porcelain plate of famille verte design, Chinese Export Ware, about 1700; Dutch hard paste porcelain cup and saucer, third quarter 18th century. Purchased with funds given by the late H. A. Norton, Esq.

Soft paste soapstone porcelain saucer, Lowestoft, about 1770. Gift of J. R. Harper, Esq.

16 Wedgwood green and yellow jasper-ware pieces, late 18th century, including 2 cream jugs, 3 bowls, 4 teapots, 2 cups and saucers, 2 lids and 1 small dish. Gift of Mrs. J. H. Plummer, Toronto, through Miss Mary Plummer.

19 porcelain birds, including 5 Chelsea gold anchor, 1 Sèvres and 1 probably Niederviller. Gift of Miss Mary Plummer.

English salt glaze dish, triangular form, mid 18th century. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Conn.

White porcelain chocolate cup and saucer, French, probably St. Cloud. Purchased.

4. Near Eastern Department

Egyptian relief sculpture with figure of a worshipper, late 18th Dynasty. Gift of Mr. Benjamin Szalatnay-Stacho.

Syrian bronze figurine, about 1500 B.C. Gift of Mr. Hyam Smith.

Assyrian relief sculpture, about 7th century B.C. showing a family group with donkey. Purchased.

5. Textile Department

Embroidered quilt, English, early 18th century. Gift of Mrs. Edgar Stone.

Patchwork quilt, English, early 19th century. Gift of Mrs. R. J. Mercur.

Collection of velvets, Italian, 15th century. Gift of Mr. A. L. Koppel.

Lace shawl, probably Brussels, 19th century. Bequest from the Laing Estate.

2 handwoven doublecloth coverlets, Ontario, 19th century. Purchased.

6. The Sigmund Samuel Canadiana Collection

Oil painting, probably Montcalm, French Canadian, 18th century; posthumous painting in oils of Colonel Wolfe, by Nathaniel Hone, 1768 - ?, signed; watercolour "The Haymarket, Montreal, 1800" by Dillen; watercolour and pen sketch "Death of Sir John Wilson" by Benjamin West, P.R.A.; several large coloured prints of Niagara Falls, including an aquatint by W. J. Bennett, 1867; another by C. Hunt after a drawing by Cockburn; 3 coloured engraved maps, one "Americae Sive Novi Orbis", published in Antwerp, 1589, by Ortelius; another, "Maris Pacifici" and "Virginiae item Floridae", both by Abrahamus Ortelius; a set of 12 coloured lithographs in four portfolios, entitled "Nova Scotia Scenery" by W. Eager, published by C. Belcher, Halifax, and Robert S. Davis, Boston, about 1831.

